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Message Text

SECRET

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61
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USSS-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ TUR: RSDILLON: CF
5/22/73 EXT 20714
APPROVED BY AMBASSADOR PORTER
S/ CCT - AMB MEYER(DRAFT)
NEA - MR DAVIES
A/ SY - MR GENTILE(DRAFT)
NEA/ ARN - MR KORN (DRAFT)
M - MR CARTER (SUB)
S/ S - MR. BARNES
L/ UNA - MR BETTAUER (INFO) N
---------- 004316
O 222312 Z MAY 73
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 098375

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASEC, TU
SUBJ: ASSASSINATION THREAT

REF: (A) ANKARA 4020; (B) BEIRUT 5864

1. DEPARTMENT APPRECIATES PROMPT REPLIES TO ITS QUESTIONS FROM EMBASSIES BEIRUT AND ANKARA. WE WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE ANY FURTHER DETAILS, RECOMMENDATIONS OR COMMENTS FROM EITHER POST. OFFICIALS HERE, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE CURIOUS ABOUT ACTUAL DELIVERY OF LETTER -- I. E. DID IT COME IN REGULAR MAIL?

2. DEPARTMENT' S TENTATIVE THINKING IS THAT IF CALL RE-CEIVED BEIRUT OPERATOR SHOULD STALL WHILE ATTEMPT IS MADE TO TRACE CALL. WE WOULD LEAVE DETAILS TO YOU. IT OCCURS
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TO US THAT THE TELEPHONE OPERATOR CAN PLAY FOR TIME WHILE FINDING SOMEONE THAT SPEAKS TURKISH. TURKISH SPEAKER COULD BE EITHER EMPLOYEE OF BEIRUT EMBASSY OR IF DESIRABLE IN YOUR JUDGMENT, AMERICAN TURKISH SPEAKING OFFICER- STALL COULD BE FURTHER PLAYED OUT BY PLAYING DUMB ABOUT LETTER AND PERHAPS SUGGESTING ANOTHER LETTER OR LATER PHONE CALL IF CALLER CONVEYS SUBSTANCE OF LETTER.

3. NEXT QUESTION TO BE FACED IS ACTION WHEN STALL RUNS OUT. DO WE PLAY ALONG WITH SCHEME IN HOPES OF IDENTIFYING THOSE INVOLVED OR DO WE CUT IT OFF? WHILE NOT EXCLUDING FIRST POSSIBILITY SUBJECT TO YOUR JUDGMENT AND PARTICULARLY TO THE JUDGMENT OF THE PEOPLE ON THE GROUND IN BEIRUT ABOUT THE ABILITY OF THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES TO HANDLE SITUATION, WE LEAN TOWARD ULTIMATELY ENDING DIALOGUE BY RESTATING OUR POLICY -- US WILL NOT PAY RANSOM UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. OUR THOUGHT HERE IS THAT IT MAY BE SAFER IN LONG RUN TO MAKE THIS CLEAR ALTHOUGH WE REALIZE IT WOULD CUT OFF OPTION OF PLAYING OUT SCHEME (ARRANGING MEETING, ETC.) AND POSSIBLY TRAPPING ONE OR MORE OF THE CONSPIRATORS.

4. IF IN JUDGMENT OF BOTH MISSIONS TURKISH SPEAKING OFFICER FROM TURKEY WOULD BE USEFUL, WE CONCUR IN TRAVEL. IT MAY BE THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO SEND TURKISH SPEAKING OFFICER WHO IS KNOWLEDGEABLE CONCERNING TURKISH UNDER-GROUND ORGANIZATIONS. IF OFFICER GOES, HOWEVER, WE THINK HE SHOULD NOT FLY DIRECTLY FROM ANKARA TO BEIRUT BUT SHOULD TAKE CIRCUITOUS ROUTE. RATIONALE HERE IS THAT INITIALLY AT LEAST BEIRUT IN EXECUTING STALL MAY WISH TO PLAY DUMB. IT MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE TO PLAY DUMB IF CONSPIRATORS THROUGH SOME MEANS FIND OUT THAT TURKISH SPEAKING OFFICER FROM EMBASSY HAD GONE TO BEIRUT TO TAKE CALL. RUSH

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** EXDIS
*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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